



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY VET CONFIRMS WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN HORSE *Second Horse Diagnosed With WNV in San Diego County*

County officials confirmed today that a second horse has been diagnosed with West Nile virus (WNV). The horse, an older Appaloosa gelding from Lakeside, brings this year's total WNV cases to two horses, 18 birds and two humans.

"Horses are very susceptible to the virus," said County Veterinarian Dr. Nikos Gurfield. "Fortunately, this horse had been vaccinated and is expected to recover. It is extremely important that horse owners properly vaccinate their horses against this deadly disease. Approximately 30% of horses infected with the virus and who develop symptoms will die."

The California Department of Food and Agriculture recommends that horses receive booster shots every 6 months.

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease that can be transmitted to humans and horses by infected mosquitoes. Signs of the disease in horses include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching or inability to stand. Contact your veterinarian immediately if your horse has any of these symptoms.

Protect yourself and your horses from mosquito bites by eliminating mosquito breeding sites around your home. Mosquito fish can be used in horse troughs, unused swimming pools, ponds and fountains to eat mosquito larvae. They are available for free at 14 locations around the county. Avoid going outdoors at dawn and dusk, wear long sleeves and long pants when outside, and use insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Ensure that windows and screens are well-maintained to keep mosquitoes from getting inside your home.

For information on WNV, mosquito fish, or to report dead birds or mosquito breeding sites, please call County Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636). You can also report dead birds on the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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